**Water Usage**

Australians use about 200 litres of water per day – this is 19 000 Giga litres of water a year. About 20 percent of this water goes to homes, farms and business use. Water shortages and the long term water supply are very important because many towns and cities are facing drought.

Australia's water supply is a highly valuable resource. Managing it is one of the great challenges facing us as we move into the future.

There are many ways to make better use of supplies of water that we have already developed. The Australian Government's Water Smart Australia Program will help develop better practices in water use across Australia.

**Water Usage at Home**

At home, we use water in:

Bathroom 40%

Kitchen 10%

Laundry 15-20%

Outdoors (pools, garden, cleaning..) 30-35%

**Smarter Use of Water at Home**

One way we can save water is by using more water-efficient products in our home. By 2021 Australians can save more than $600 million through in water and energy costs by choosing more water friendly equipment.

To help Australians save water, the **Water Efficiency and Labeling Standards (WELS) Scheme** requires products to be labeled so that we can buy products that help reduce water consumption and save money on water and energy bills.

**Saving Water in the Bathroom**

* Turn the tap off when brushing your teeth. Wet your brush and use a glass for rinsing.
* Take shorter showers and when in the shower, turn off the water when using soap then, turn the shower back on to wash down and rinse off soap. Shorter showers also save on energy costs as there is less energy used to heat water. You can even use a shower timer to help shorten the time spent in the shower.
* Buy water efficient taps.
* Use a bucket to collect water while waiting for the shower to get hot. This extra water can be used to water the garden.
* Insulate hot water pipes. This avoids wasting water while waiting for hot water to flow through and saves energy.
* Make sure your hot water system temperature is not set too high. If the temperature is too hot and you add cold water, this wastes more water
* Only fill the bathtub with as much water as needed. When finished, use a bucket to collect the water and use this on the garden or to wash your car. We must check that the soapy water does not harm our garden plants or lawn.
* Install a dual flush toilet so that can save you 50 per cent of water on each flush.

 

**Saving Water in the Kitchen**

* The dishwasher uses the most water in the kitchen. When buying a dishwasher make sure it has a good WELS Label or star rating. The best water rating for dishwashers is 5 star.
* Only use the dishwasher when you have a full load.
* Use the rinse-hold setting on the dishwasher, if it has one, rather than rinsing dishes under the tap.

**Saving Water in the Laundry**

* When turning on the washing machine, make sure the machine is full of clothes (and not half full). When washing a full load of clothes, this can save up to 10 litres if water each time. Washing with cold water is also better as we are using less energy to heat up the water.
* Look for washing machines that have a four or more star rating.
* Consider buying a water efficient front loading washing machine and not a top loading washing machine.
* Adjust the water level so that the water covers the clothes and that the machine does not fill up to the top with water.

**Saving Water in the Garden/Collecting Rainwater (With a Tank)**

* Rainwater tanks are becoming a more common feature in our backyards with around 17% of all homes installing a tank on their property. More homes need to purchase a rainwater tank if we want to make a real difference to save water as supplies are now low.
* We can save large amounts of water by using the collected rain drops/water on our garden or in our homes.
* During the wet season, when the garden doesn't need any extra watering, rainwater can be connected to the house and used for toilet flushing as well as in the laundry.
* Rainwater is also suitable for use in pools and for washing cars.

 

**Wasting Water**

Farmers use up to 70% of water in Australia.Most are using the water without a licence by collecting rainwater in farm dams. About 20% of this water is lost in transporting as it seeps into the ground.

Water restrictions help us limit how much water we can put into the garden.

Water is very important part of all our lives. We need water for human activities such as drinking, growing food, and recreation. Healthy environments also need water – the water must be of high quality and supply.

In the past the value of water was taken for granted. With increasing water shortages, Australians now realize that water is important for many functions. Water should be protected and used wisely if we are to retain those things that we need and value.

Water quality and river health is very important to the Australian Government and is involved in a number of programs that aim to protect and improve water quality.

 

 

**Water Use – The Murray River**

Without water used from the rivers of the Murray-Darling Basin, Australia would be a very different country. Australia relies on the Murray-Darling Basin to produce a large part of the countries’ food supply. There are 6 major pipelines which transport and pump water from the river. The water is used for the following things:

* Irrigation (to water plants and crops)
* Supplies to homes, farms and businesses
* Drinking water for animals and humans
* Recreation (swimming and fishing)
* Making Electricity

 

The Australian Government has spent millions of dollars to restore the Murray River. This program is called **“Living Murray”** and started in 2002**.**  It aims to achieve a healthy working River Murray system for the benefit of all Australians. This includes returning water to the River’s environment.



The Living Murray Program



Drought on the Murray River